

2001 ADDRESS BY SPEAKER JIM KREIDER

Thank you...honored guests, fellow colleagues, ladies and gentleman...

Like all good representatives, I would like to start off on the right foot by first recognizing the importance of home...

Please give a warm welcome to my family: My lovely bride of 24 years, Debbie, and my daughters, Lacey and Neeley...who couldn't be with us today.

And let's give all our families and constituents across this state a sincere round of applause for making this job worth doing!

For those of you who don't know -- I'm Jim Kreider...from Christian County, still the fastest growing county in the state of Missouri.

I am truly humbled by the honor of serving as Speaker of the House of Representatives...The House of the people of the great state of Missouri.

As I see it, the job of Speaker, contrary to the title, is the job of a listener. It is a job of one who hears the voices of the people through you -- the members of this body.

In my opinion, the Speaker is someone who helps you lift up the collective hopes, dreams, and aspirations of our citizens... and provides their families and children with an opportunity to make those dreams a reality.

As public servants, we are each charged with a tremendous responsibility -- the responsibility of representing the best interests of nearly thirty-five thousand Missourians...each

With all those diverse viewpoints, it's easy for the average Missourian to feel as if their voice is falling on deaf ears...It is our responsibility to see to it that this doesn't happen.

It is not necessarily those with the loudest voice that have the greatest need.

...Often, the softest voice is the one that should guide our actions.

It's the voice of our children...It's the voice of our seniors... It's the voice of our working families...

And to all of these people, I am here today to say, "we hear you"...

To the teachers who have been asked to do more with less pay -- we hear you...

To the students in overcrowded classrooms, receiving less than a quality education.

To the thousands of senior citizens who face a decision between putting food on the table and getting the prescription medications that could help them live longer, healthier lives -- we hear you.

To the business owners, farmers, workers and families whose livelihood and safety are threatened by an aging and outdated transportation system - we hear you.

And most importantly, to the people of Missouri, who are tired of partisan bickering, gridlock and tear-down politics - we hear you...loud and clear.

You, the citizens of Missouri, have done your part...you have elected us to represent you -- now it is our turn to make sure your voices are heard...

It is a new session...a new beginning...with new expectations...but old responsibilities...

Over the next 2 years, we must remember to preserve the integrity of the legislative process.

We must remember to treat each other with respect, whether you're a newly elected member or serving your last term.

And we must remember to honor the traditions set forth by this body over the past 180 years.

To do otherwise would mean betraying the trust of those who bestowed upon us the privilege to serve.

If we can work together and find common ground while listening to the voices of those we were elected to serve, then the next two years will be successful regardless of how many new laws are passed.

As your Speaker, I extend my hand to every duly elected representative on both sides of the aisle...

Each of you deserves the opportunity to have the voices of your constituents heard...

And as long as we can focus our efforts on carrying out the will of the people of our state, the Missouri House of Representatives will continue to be "The House of the People".

And their will, will remain the supreme law.

Thank You... Now let's get to work.